Food Processing Industrial Estates. The Schemes of the Ministry are not State specific.

(b) During the year 1995-96, a proposal was received from the State Government of West Bengal for setting up of Food Processing Industrial Estate at Dankuni in District Hoogly by a private sector undertaking, for which financial assistance of Rs. 75 lakhs was provided to them.

(c) to (e) Any other proposal received from any State/Union Territory for setting up such Food Processing Industrial Estates would be considered on merits, subject to availability of funds.

Agricultural Mechanization in Maharashtra

1535. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing any programme for the promotion of agricultural mechanization among small farmers in the state of Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the funds released for the programme during the last three years, year-wise; and

(d) the results so far achieved in the State under the programme, with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization among Small Farmers', a subsidy @ 30%, limited to Rs. 30,000/- is available to the farmers, group of farmers, Registered Cooperative Societies, Agricultural Credit Societies and Multi-purpose Agricultural Farming Societies, for the purchase of small tractors upto 30 Power Take Off Horse Power; along with their matching implements, not exceeding three, in number.

(c) During the last three years, funds amounting to Rs. 257.70 lakh have been released to the State of Maharashtra under the Scheme, as per details, given below:—

1993-94	Rs. 154.20 lakh
1994-95	Nil
1995-96	103.50 lakh

(d) During the 8th Plan period, so far 925 number of tractors have been subsidised, under the Scheme, in the State of Maharashtra. This has contributed, to some extent, in increasing the agriculture productivity, reduction in the cost of cultivation and consequently raising the income of farmers.

Settlement of grievances of employees of BSI, Calcutta

1536. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a communication dated 30.10.96 from Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers, Delhi seeking settlement of some issues concerning the employees of Botanical Survey of India, (BSI);

(b) if so, the issues mentioned therein; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to settle the issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) to (c) A communication dated 30.10.96 from the Secretary General, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers (CCGE&W), Delhi was received by the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests (GOI, MOEF). Referring to some issues concerning the employees of Botanical Survey of India (BSI), the Secretary General, CCGE&W in this letter requested Secretary, GOI, MOEF to have discussions with the representatives of BSI Employees Association (BSIEA) to inform them of the steps being taken by the Ministry to resolve the issues. Meanwhile, the Secretary General, BSIEA also requested a meeting with the Secretary, GOI, MOEF. The Secretary met the representatives of BSIEA on 13.11.1996. Various issues concerning the employees of the BSI were discussed in this meeting and the representatives were informed of the steps being taken by the Ministry to resolve these issues.

The important issues on which progress of action was noted in this meeting were as follows:—

(1) Implementation of Biswas Committee Report regarding relaxation of the requirement of M.Sc. qualifications for appointment by promotion as Scientist 'B', in favour of Scientists in the feeder grade who possess B.Sc. qualifications.

(2) Direct recruitment to current vacancies of posts of Scientists and upgradation of some posts of Stenographers after seeking and obtaining relaxations of the instructions which prohibit such direct recruitment/upgradation when work measurement study is in progress in the BSI. The need to complete the work measurement study urgently was also emphasised.

(3) Restructuring of the posts of Drivers, and consideration of awards of higher scales of pay to Fieldman & Dresser.

(4) Filling up of 2 posts of Administrative Officers.

Organic Farming

1537. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that organic farming is becoming very popular in our country;

(b) if so, the response of Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken to encourage organic farming?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Keeping in view the beneficial effects of organic manures on soil and crop production, harmful effects associated with indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals, etc., organic approach to farming is being increasingly accepted.

(b) and (c) Government is encouraging integrated nutrient and pest management by implementing the following schemes:—

(i) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilizers.

(ii) National Project on Development of Fertilizers Use in Low Consumption and Rainfed Areas.

(iii) National Project on Development and Use of Bio-fertilizers.

(iv) Integrated Pest Management Programme.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is also promoting the organic approach to farming through several All India coordinated Research projects on long-term fertilizer experiments under different soil and agro climatic conditions for sustained crop growth.

"Delay in Environmental Clearances"

1538. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of applications are kept pending at the various offices of the Regional CCF;

(b) whether there is any rule or regulations under which these delays can be eliminated;

(c) how many applications are pending at each of the RCCF offices all over the country;

(d) whether some applications are pending for more than three months; and

(e) the steps proposed to streamline the work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) No, Sir. However, some proposals under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are pending with the Regional Offices due to non-achievement of targets of compensatory afforestation in some States.

(b) Para 4.12 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 Rules & Guidelines lays down the specific time limits for disposal of references at various levels.